

MEDIA RELEASE

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Future Energy Pty Ltd



VCAT Backs Hepburn Community Wind Farm

The Hepburn Shire is set to have Australia's first community owned wind farm. VCAT has upheld the Shire Council's February decision to grant a planning permit for the Hepburn Community Wind Park.

The wind farm, to be situated on Leonards Hill approximately 10 km south of Daylesford, will consist of two turbines each with a capacity of 2 Megawatts. The wind farm will produce enough energy for up to 2,500 homes, equivalent to the number of homes in Daylesford and Hepburn Springs.

The community wind farm is being developed by the Melbourne based renewable energy company, Future Energy Pty Ltd, in association with the local Hepburn Renewable Energy Association, HREA.

The company's Managing Director, David Shapero, was very happy with the decision. "We'd like to thank everyone who supported the application. Particularly we thank the Hepburn community and Council, Sustainability Victoria and the Australian Wind Energy Association, AusWind, for their magnificent support. This project is already an inspiration to communities across Australia and we think it will prove to be the first of many community owned renewable energy projects."

HREA President, Per Bernard, thanked Future Energy. "It's clear from the VCAT decision that Future Energy prepared a very comprehensive application covering all the environmental and amenity issues. It gives us a lot of confidence that we can continue working together to complete this great community project," he said.

The community ownership concept is modelled on the success of similar wind farms across Europe and more recently the USA. David Shapero continued, "Our model is based on the success of overseas community owned renewable energy projects. The model allows everyone, whether they be individuals, businesses or superannuation funds, to own some renewable energy generation and share in the benefits these projects offer. At the same time, they're playing a part in tackling climate change. And, of course, our community ownership model can be applied to any type of renewable energy."

The group recently established the Hepburn Community Wind Park Co-operative Ltd which will eventually own the wind farm. Future Energy will now work with the Co-operative to guide the project through to completion. The Co-operative has nine directors. The inaugural Chairperson, Simon Holmes à Court, is enthusiastic about his involvement. "It's a wonderful community project and I congratulate everyone who has helped get us this far. There's a lot of work to be done and we're looking forward to working with Future Energy and the community to make it happen."

David Shapero said, "This is a magnificent milestone but there's a lot of work still to be done before we start the fund raising process. Obviously the government funding is a good start." Last year, Sustainability Victoria allocated \$975,000 for the wind farm.

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